

Place Names

What are place names? From where do they originate? How are they structured? What do they signify? How important are they in our life? This groundbreaking book explores these compelling questions and more by providing a thorough introduction to the assumptions, theories, terminology, and methods in toponymy and toponomastics – the studies of place names and proper names respectively. It is the first comprehensive resource on the topic in a single volume and explores the history and development of toponyms, focusing on the conceptual and methodological issues pertinent to the study of place names around the world. It presents a wide range of examples and case studies illustrating the structure, function, and importance of toponyms from ancient times to the present day. Wide-ranging yet accessible, it is an indispensable source of knowledge for students and scholars in linguistics, toponymy and toponomastics, onomastics, etymology, and historical linguistics.

FRANCESCO PERONO CACCIAFOCO is an associate professor in linguistics at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University. Before joining XJTLU, he was a senior lecturer in historical linguistics at Nanyang Technological University. He works on the etymology of Indo-European place names, on the study of Aegean scripts, on cryptography, on language deciphering, and on language documentation.

FRANCESCO CAVALLARO is an associate professor in linguistics at Nanyang Technological University. His research interests are in sociolinguistics and the social aspects of bilingualism, especially of minority groups in multilingual contexts.

Place Names

Approaches and Perspectives in Toponymy and Toponomastics

Francesco Perono Cacciafoco

Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University

Francesco Cavallaro

Nanyang Technological University

Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-108-49016-0 — Place Names
Francesco Perono Cacciafoco , Francesco Cavallaro
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)



Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India
103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108490160
DOI: 10.1017/9781108780384

© Francesco Perono Cacciafoco and Francesco Cavallaro 2022

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

First published 2022

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-108-49016-0 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-108-74824-7 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xxiii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 What are Names and Toponyms?	1
1.2 What are the Sub-Disciplines Connected with Toponymy?	2
1.3 Strategies and Categories in Toponymic Research	4
1.4 Different Approaches to Toponymy	6
1.5 How do we Classify Toponyms? A Brief Outline of Toponymic Classification Systems	8
1.6 How Are Toponyms Structured?	18
1.7 Toponymic Systems	19
1.8 Toponyms as Linguistic Fossils	22
2 Language Change	24
2.1 What Is Language Change?	24
2.2 Language Change and Toponymy	25
2.3 The Comparative Method	28
2.4 How Toponyms Are Affected by Language Change	29
2.5 Toponymy and Language Decipherment	31
2.6 Toponymy and the Decipherment of Linear B	34
2.7 Toponymy in Minoan <i>Crete</i> : An Experimental Case Study	38
2.8 Summary	45
3 Historical Toponomastics	46
3.1 Historical Approaches to Toponymy	46
3.2 Historical Toponomastics	47
3.3 Methodologies in Historical Toponomastics	49
3.4 Case Studies in Historical Toponomastics	50
3.5 Dealing with Paretymologies in Historical Toponomastics	64
3.6 A Paradigm for Contact Etymology	75
3.7 Summary	79

vi	Contents	
4	Toponymy and the Historical-Linguistic Reconstruction of Proto-Languages	80
4.1	Pre-Languages and Proto-Languages	81
4.2	Giacomo Devoto's 'Mediterranean Theory'	86
4.3	Marija Gimbutas' 'Kurgan Hypothesis'	87
4.4	Hans Krahe's 'Old European Hydronymy'	88
4.5	Theo Vennemann's 'Vasconic Substratum Theory'	92
4.6	Mario Alinei's 'Palaeolithic Continuity Theory', or the 'Palaeolithic Continuity Paradigm'	93
4.7	Pre-Languages, Proto-Languages, and Toponymy	95
4.8	The Notion of 'Pre-Proto-Indo-European': The Case of the * <i>h₂albh-/*alb-</i> Toponymic System	97
4.9	The Toponymic Persistence of Prehistoric Stems: The Case of the * <i>kar-</i> Root	104
4.10	From Pre-Language to Proto-Language: The Case of the * <i>borm-</i> Root	109
4.11	Summary	113
5	Diachronic Toponymy	114
5.1	What Is Diachronic Toponymy?	114
5.2	Methodologies in Diachronic Toponymy	115
5.3	A Diachronic Toponymy Case Study: Abui	118
5.4	Diachronic Toponymy and Historical Semantics	123
5.5	Oral Stories as Toponymic Data	129
5.6	Summary	132
6	Landscape and Toponymy	134
6.1	What Is Landscape?	134
6.2	Landscape Archaeology and Toponymy	137
6.3	Landscape Archaeology and Toponymy Case Studies	139
6.4	Toponymy and Abui Myths and Legends	151
6.5	Summary	156
7	Historical Toponomastics and Historical Geography	158
7.1	The Relationship between Historical Toponomastics and Historical Geography	158
7.2	The Case Study of <i>Bistagno</i>	161
7.3	Historical Geography and Contemporary Odonymy: The Case Study of <i>Bucharest</i>	173
7.4	Historical Toponomastics and Historical Geography in <i>Singapore</i> Toponymy	180
7.5	Historical Geographic Information Systems	186
7.6	Summary	188
8	Synchronic Toponymy	190
8.1	Contemporary Naming Processes	190
8.2	What Is Synchronic Toponymy?	192
8.3	Methodologies in Synchronic Toponymy	194
8.4	Odonymy in a Young Country: The Case of <i>Singapore</i>	198
8.5	Critical Toponymies	208

Contents	vii
8.6 The Commodification of Place Names	211
8.7 Toponymic Commodification, Identity, and Tourism	215
8.8 Summary	219
9 Place Names and Society	221
9.1 Toponyms as a Social Construct	221
9.2 Toponymy and Indigeneity	223
9.3 Toponyms, Ideology, and Power Relationships	224
9.4 Colonialism	227
9.5 Renaming and Decolonising Toponyms	228
9.6 The Cultural Politics of Naming	232
9.7 Other Toponymic Changes	234
9.8 Toponymic Nicknames	237
9.9 Summary	240
10 Toponymy and Cartography	242
10.1 What Is Cartography?	242
10.2 The Functions of Place Names on the Map	243
10.3 Place Names and Cartography across Time	246
10.4 Colonialism and the Age of Discoveries	252
10.5 Cartography Today	258
10.6 Phantom Place Names on the Map	259
10.7 Summary	265
<i>Glossary</i>	266
<i>References</i>	275
<i>Index</i>	297

Figures

2.1	Linear B tablet and transcription. Mycenaean tablet (MY Oe 106) from the House of the Oil Merchant. The tablet states the amount of wool to be dyed (adapted from Marsyas, 2005)	page 34
2.2	Linear B Syllabograms (elaboration by Francesco Perono Cacciafoco)	39
3.1	Location of <i>Sessame</i> (adapted from d-maps, 2021)	53
3.2	Location of the <i>Squaneto</i> municipality (sources: Comune di Spigno, 2004; d-maps, 2021)	57
3.3	Position and coat of arms of the <i>Borgomale</i> municipality (adapted from d-maps, 2021; Vale93b, 2019)	68
3.4	Historical maps showing the location of <i>Bailu Zhou</i> (adapted from Chen, 1516)	73
4.1	A family tree showing some of the 144 languages within the Indo-European language family	83
4.2	Krahe's list of Old European hydronyms for the root <i>*sal-/*salm-</i> (adapted from Ras67, 2017a)	89
4.3	Krahe's list of Old European hydronyms for the root <i>*al-/*alm-</i> (adapted from Ras67, 2017b)	90
4.4	Location of the <i>Bormida River</i> (adapted from Ceragioli, 2014; d-maps, 2021)	110
5.1	Map of the Alor-Pantar languages spoken in the <i>Alor</i> archipelago (adapted from Holton, 2009)	118
6.1	Position and coat of arms of the <i>Pareto</i> municipality (adapted from Comune di Pareto, 2017; d-maps, 2021)	140
6.2	Map of <i>Nigeria</i> showing the area of the study by Aleru and Alabi (2010) (adapted from d-maps, 2021)	143
6.3	A view of the <i>Takalelàng</i> area from the northeast, generated using Google Earth. This picture illustrates the basic landscape categories in <i>Takalelàng</i> , such as villages located at the top of the mountains, trading places (<i>ailol</i>) along the coast, and resting places (<i>lulang</i>) (source: Kratochvíl et al., 2016, p. 85)	145

List of Figures		ix
6.4	The view of villages in the <i>Takalelàng</i> area, showing their location and the parallel coastal trading places (source: Kratochvíl et al., 2016, p. 89)	149
6.5	The two Abui ritual and ceremonial houses, <i>Kolwàt</i> and <i>Kanurwàt</i> (source: Perono Cacciafoco and Cavallaro, 2017, p. 54)	155
7.1	Location of <i>Bistagno</i> (adapted from d-maps, 2021)	162
8.1	Map of <i>Singapore</i> (adapted from Zozaz1, 2021)	199
8.2	The longest place name in the world, <i>New Zealand</i> (adapted from Schwede66, 2015)	217
8.3	<i>Penny Lane, Liverpool</i> , with Paul McCartney's signature (in the white oval) (adapted from Roblespepe, 2018)	219
10.1	Scale and symbols on an old map (adapted from Megistias, 2010)	244
10.2	Carving on a mammoth tusk found near <i>Pavlov, Czech Republic</i> (Zde, 2007)	248
10.3	Part of the <i>Tabula Peutingeriana</i> , from the Austrian National Library (Sayatek, 2019)	249
10.4	Silvano's 1511 map of the world (Lanamy, 2020)	251
10.5	The 1908 British chart showing <i>Sandy Island</i> (ZX95, 2012)	262

Tables

1.1	Stewart's toponymic typology	<i>page 9</i>
1.2	Rudnyčkyj's typology (adapted from Tent and Blair, 2011, p. 72)	11
1.3	Rennick's toponymic typology (Rennick, 2005; adapted from Tent and Blair, 2011, p. 77)	13
1.4	Redefined classification by Blair and Tent (2021, pp. 41–3)	15
2.1	Examples of Indo-European cognates	29
2.2	Initial Linear B grid by Ventris (Chadwick, 1958, p. 58)	36
2.3	Possible <i>Minoan</i> place names and their reconstructions (adapted from Younger, 2020, 10c)	41
3.1	A step-by-step guide to historical toponomastics	51
4.1	The <i>*alb-</i> toponymic system. The listed toponyms derive from the root <i>*alb-</i> and its associated variants	100
5.1	A step-by-step guide to diachronic toponymy	116
5.2	An example of step 1 in a diachronic toponymy study of four Abui place names	119
5.3	A summary of historical semantics criteria that can complement the historical-linguistic and anthropological-linguistic study of place names (Perono Cacciafoco et al., 2015)	124
5.4	A linguistic/toponymic analysis of <i>Afena Hapong</i> (Perono Cacciafoco et al., 2015, p. 41)	125
5.5	Diachronic toponymy and historical toponomastics	133
6.1	Abui toponyms based on landscape features (Kratochvíl et al., 2016)	146
6.2	Abui toponyms based on agricultural and horticultural sources	146
6.3	A list of common crops used in the naming of places on <i>Alor Island</i>	147
6.4	Abui toponyms based on useful plants	148
6.5	Abui village governance terminology	150
6.6	Abui terms that denote human settlements or their parts	150
6.7	Abui toponyms derived from human activities	151

List of Tables	xi
7.1 Renaming (in English translation) of major boulevards and squares in <i>Bucharest</i> by the ruling Communist Party in 1948 (adapted from Light et al., 2002, p. 137)	175
7.2 Number of streets in <i>Bucharest</i> named after prominent dates and people according to the Communist national narrative in 1954 (adapted from Light et al., 2002, p. 141)	177
8.1 Results of a study on the naming practices in <i>Australia</i> by the Dutch, English, and French, 1603–1803 (Tent and Slayter, 2009, p. 27)	196
9.1 Examples of nicknames of cities	240
9.2 Examples of nicknames of states	241
9.3 Examples of nicknames of countries	241
10.1 List of place names examined by Siniscalchi and Palagiano (2018)	250

Preface

Since 1876, when the term *toponymy* was used for the first time in English (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*), studies on place names have proliferated, covering the large majority of the areas of the world and investigating toponyms according to different, multifaceted approaches (intensive, extensive, qualitative, quantitative, etymological, geographical, statistical, critical, sociological, political, and so on) and through multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.

The study of ancient place names can be configured as a sort of ‘archaeology of language’ that allows us to uncover many facets of our past’ and even discover remote changes in population and settlement dynamics which date back to before any form of writing and written documentation was invented. The historical-linguistic, historical-phonetic, and etymological reconstruction of place names developed by toponymists can be compared to the patient detective work of archaeologists in excavation sites and on archaeological findings. Both involve the slow, careful, and meticulous uncovering of many prehistoric and historical layers, in order to understand when an artefact was made and, in the context of toponymy, when a place name was coined. The recovery of the different diachronic stages of the morphology of a toponym can be configured as a ‘toponymic stratigraphy’ that can lead us far back in time to its proto-form and root. Indeed, place names are among the few surviving vestiges of prehistoric human communities, and their study can help us to open a window through which we may view facets of their lives and events that happened before what is properly called history.

At the same time, the sociolinguistic and sociological study of toponyms allows us to understand the everyday relations between human beings and their places and place names. This synchronic view of toponyms enables us to analyse the many implications, at the cultural, social, political, societal, and, ultimately, personal/intimate levels, arising from the mutual interaction between people and their naming practices. Toponyms are part of the cultural identity of individuals and, hence, are affected by the social and linguistic changes people undergo. The naming practices human beings implement on places are, generally, aimed at safeguarding their memory, celebrating what

they deem worthy, and commemorating important events and people. However, they can also have the opposite use, that is, to ‘delete’ history, and to make individuals and historical facts fall into forgetfulness.

The link to landscape, the identity-making and deep perception of a name of a place by local speakers, or the total loss of its origins and the stories generated around its possible explanation by the same local speakers, the pride connected with a toponym, or the simple familiarity with it have been ‘always there’ in the memory of individuals. They all are intangible components of the strength and value of place names, which go beyond their analytical and linguistic study and which ingenerate in human beings a sort of ‘feeling of (or for) the places’, which, in turn, becomes part of the cultural heritage of people and their collective memory.

This ‘feeling of the places’ reverberates in the intimate relationship between the landscape, its landmarks, and its names. This intimate relationship would not exist without the people who give names to the elements of their environment, the actual naming subjects. They are a necessary and fundamental social component that materially produces and perpetuates those names, in a naming process that is not only a natural ‘linguistic procedure’ – to give a name to what is still unnamed – but also reflects the deep, spontaneous, necessary, intellectual, and even sentimental connections between human beings, the territory and landscape, and land and places. Robert Macfarlane wonderfully describes these relations, among his other works, in his celebrated book *Landmarks* (2016), and we (as well as more or less everyone in the world, probably) have experienced the same feeling when, in our childhood, we were walking in the countryside with our grandparents, who were unveiling to us a whole world made of stories and memories connected with the names of the places and their landmarks – a heritage beautifully portrayed, among others, by Margaret Gelling and Ann Cole in their extraordinary book *The Landscape of Place-Names* (2000) and by Anna Pavord in her truly remarkable work titled *Landskipping* (2016). Heritage, memories, and place names, being intangible and largely undocumented, are cultural components which, every day, are at risk of being lost. However, while place names exist and are passed down from generation by generation by people, and studied and recorded by scholars, that heritage, those memories, and the attachment to the places will never be really lost, because they are (sometimes enigmatically) attested and preserved in the names themselves, the names of the places.

The task of all current and future toponymists starts exactly from there, from the need, which is configurable as a mission, to document and recover the origins and the stories of those names, to return them to the new generations, and, through them, to safeguard the ‘feeling of the places’, the intrinsic nature of the deep and ancestral relationship between human beings and their

landscapes, lands, territories, landmarks, and the atavistic memories connected with them.

All this goes beyond linguistics, or history, or geography, and the analytical study of place names allows scholars to portray, or at least to draft, a more or less comprehensive picture and context of the toponyms. This context includes the culture of the human beings who coined those place names and of all the generations of individuals who, consciously or unconsciously, contributed to their survival, by passing them down over centuries and even millennia simply by using them, talking about them, and ‘speaking’ them.

The fact that, besides written records, place names are essentially ‘told’ and ‘spoken’ by people makes them pure linguistic entities shaped, over time, by the natural ‘making of the language’. They are made by individuals, and this uninterrupted naming process connects all humans with each other. Toponyms change, in their morphology and semantics, over time exactly because they follow the path of human communication and the linguistic shifts that arise due to the diachronic evolution of languages. They are also sometimes ‘fossils’ because they do not always align with the historical development of the common lexical items of a language, and therefore they assume, somehow, their own typical and individual morphology, sometimes enigmatic, sometimes incompatible with the general sound laws regulating the diachronic changes of a language. The toponymic evolution they experience, nonetheless, is almost always produced by linguistic phenomena which are ‘living’, since place names are ‘told’ and ‘spoken’, and this therefore makes of them a very specific (or special) category of ‘linguistic fossils’. Indeed, in a way, they are ‘living’ toponymic records, also because they are sometimes possibly the only surviving evidence of a remote past and of remote stages of a language. Very ancient place names are still in existence in our times, and this makes them very valuable linguistic relics.

Toponyms, actually, are not easy to define. A common phrase uttered in the classroom by Dr Francesco Perono Cacciafoco is, ‘a place name is a place name’, and this self-evident, very simple tautology is, perhaps, the best explanation of what a place name is, because a place name is everything we wrote above and a lot more. A toponym shows, in itself, a sort of cultural syncretism, which is unsuspected when we first start to deal with it. A place name, generally, is taken for granted, and rarely people wonder about its origins or original meaning or its histories or even the stories which surround it. Therefore, it is ‘simple’ because it is ‘just a word’ heard or used in everyday life. Being ‘simple’, there seems to be no reason to investigate it. However, we know that a place name is not simple at all, and that a true etymological reconstruction of a toponym could require a whole paper or a book in itself to explicate it. Everything is in the name, its history, its etymological origins, its

original meaning, the stories connected with it, and its cultural impact. All, therefore, comes from the name.

Not many people realise that the historical-linguistic study of place names is one of the keys to cracking the code of the ancient origins of languages and to answer the fundamental question: ‘what came before?’. What came before, throughout the different stages of our current languages and of the languages and proto-languages from which our languages derive? What came before our times and the times before ours, and before our ancestors and their ancestors? What do we know of the culture and beliefs of peoples so ancient that they left no written memory, because writing had not been invented in their times yet? What came before place names and before places got those names, in a time when the first humans with language started giving names to their world? Sometimes, the historical-linguistic study of toponyms allows us to ‘feel’ the aural sensation of our most remote ancestors, who, in a possibly terrible and extremely dangerous existence, as life would have been in prehistoric times, nonetheless had the privilege, for the first time, of giving names to the features of their world. Indeed, ideally they, the above-mentioned first ‘naming subjects’, were at a specific point in time (of course, varying chronologically and geographically from place to place, and with varying dynamics of language disappearance and regeneration) the first ones to coin names for ‘all things’ and, indeed, for their places. They were the ‘first namers’. Finding out who they were and the languages they were speaking is the focus, or the ultimate mission, of a historical linguist, as well as of a toponymist dealing with the historical-linguistic analysis of place names. That is, to try to reconstruct their names for places and to give us a sense of how the languages of those remote and long-forgotten ancestors sounded.

Convergently, the documentary study of place names, an important component of research in language documentation and field linguistics, enables scholars to work on toponyms at two different, but interrelated, levels. On one hand, a field linguist dealing with aboriginal and/or Indigenous toponymy in undocumented and endangered linguistic contexts gives an irreplaceable contribution to document and safeguard languages which are at high risk of disappearance. On the other hand, by studying local place names and documenting them, the field linguist is able not only to hypothesise and establish links among place names within the same language or within languages belonging to the same language family, but also has the possibility to outline a sort of ‘diachronic stratigraphy’ of those place names, and to infer theories on their relatedness and their development over time. Despite working with generally undocumented languages, the morphological comparison of place names and the assessment of their role in the general linguistic context of a newly documented language enable the researcher to establish internal relations and filiation processes among aboriginal and/or Indigenous place names

(and also common lexical items). This can be done even when the place names do not allow for a precise and chronological reconstruction at the level of diachronic development, and generally the linguist is able to answer, at least partly, the fundamental above-mentioned question: ‘what came before?’.

A sociological and sociolinguistic approach to the study of place names, such as those connected with critical toponymies and political toponymy, is essential in interpreting and analysing toponyms. In these approaches, the place names are not treated as prehistoric ‘living fossils’ or undocumented lexical items which can reveal significant elements of an ancient or an aboriginal and/or Indigenous culture, but as ‘living’ linguistic elements actively or passively interacting with speakers *hic et nunc* or, at least, in modern and contemporary times. The sociological and sociolinguistic approach to the study of place names, therefore, enables the researchers to put their finger on the pulse of a community and to analyse toponyms in their dynamics connected both with modern and contemporary societies and their developments, and with the sociological aspects of their nature as ‘linguistic items’ in living languages. In this context, this study of toponymy could be defined as ‘synchronic’, even if it always contemplates a diachronic interpretation of societies and sociolinguistic elements.

The motivation for this book originated from a course in toponymy and toponomastics taught by Dr Perono Cacciafoco. The module was a successful and pioneering attempt to introduce topics in toponymy and toponomastics to undergraduate students through an interdisciplinary approach involving historical linguistics, etymology, language documentation, human geography, historical geography, urban geography, history, palaeoanthropology, archaeology, and sociology.

One main challenge in teaching that course was the lack of an authoritative and reliable text on toponymy and toponomastics. Without a single guiding reference, the module was based on the large scientific literature available, which was, unavoidably, somewhat dispersed. What was needed was, therefore, a general and comprehensive source to be used as an exact and timely reference on the discipline of toponymy in itself, with a standardisation of the specialised terminology and with a consistent apparatus of examples aimed at triggering and nurturing the interest of students and young scholars towards the study of place names. Hence, the idea of this book. An academic reference text in toponymy and toponomastics was born. A volume like this requires balance in the use of the sources and in the choice and explanation of examples. With this in mind, this book aims at being a solid and, at the same time, agile source and reference for students and scholars interested in place names, their history, and their analysis. Indeed, the goal of the large set of case studies provided in this volume is to enable readers to start their journey in toponymy as proactive researchers.

A book like this, by necessity, has to be ‘general’, both in its theoretical contents and in the comments and explanations of examples which it presents. ‘General’, nonetheless, does not mean ‘simplistic’ or ‘generic’. Indeed, every academic reference text needs to be selective, and it was therefore not possible to include in this volume toponyms from all the language families of the world or examples from all the linguistic contexts. Nonetheless, readers can find well-documented case studies, which have been carefully chosen because of their paradigmatic nature, as they offer deeply founded methodological examples and patterns which can be applied (with the unavoidable required adjustments depending on their different contexts) to toponymic reconstructions from all over the world. Besides the academic and scientific rigour in delineating each context and the related case studies, this book also has the courage to deal with advanced topics in historical-linguistic and toponymic reconstruction, which, sometimes, are examined through experimental approaches. For instance, readers will be introduced to the notion of ‘pre-language’, which, in some aspects, is controversial or not considered fundamental in historical linguistics, but which is essential in the screening and assessment of the nature of very ancient place names. In this book, we will also grapple with the concept of ‘language contact in prehistoric times’, which is believed by some linguists to be problematic and difficult to prove for very remote eras. We take the stance that place names, in the absence of written records or material culture findings, can sometimes help us to hypothesise the existence of very ancient linguistic roots and proto-forms, and to reconstruct possible movements of populations and settlement dynamics.

One of the main contributions of this volume is to sort out a plethora of toponymic terms and definitions and, finally, lay out a definitive nomenclature for all the sub-disciplines and technical lexicons in toponomastics. Up to now, there have not been clear definitions given to the different approaches in the field, and the terminology has been vague and applied differently by different scholars. This has created somewhat of a confusing situation in toponymy. We may not be the first to have used labels such as ‘historical toponomastics’, ‘diachronic toponymy’, and ‘synchronic toponymy’. However, in this volume, we finally give these terms their rightful place and importance in the field and eliminate the ambiguity and vagueness which characterised them. As such, in this book, we have clearly distinguished the sub-disciplines of toponymy and given all the technical terms out there their proper and logical explanations and place. For example, probably for the first time, ‘historical toponomastics’ is defined as the historical reconstruction of toponyms through the analysis of available written sources and documents, while ‘diachronic toponymy’ is the study of place names in the absence of written and documented records. ‘Synchronic toponymy’, in turn, is also clearly presented as the analysis of toponyms in the context of the *hic et nunc* (modern and contemporary times) at

the cultural and sociological level. We also take the opportunity to explain very specific and interrelated contexts of the study of place names, by providing, for example, the clear definitions of key concepts and thematic areas.

Indeed, the development and establishment of notions and sub-disciplines in toponymy is part of our efforts to systematise epistemological contents and technical terminology in this field, and to provide students and scholars with a source which is accurate and complete not only at the level of details and examples, but also at the theoretical and terminological level. By formalising and standardising a technical lexicon in toponymy, we aim to express toponymic notions with exactness and clarity and to give substance to a toponymic vocabulary relevant to both students and scholars.

Examples are provided from a large range of languages, language families, cultural contexts, societal environments, and epistemological approaches. Of course, a volume like this should, ideally, deal with all the place names of the world, in a sort of hubris-project *à la Bouvard et Pécuchet*. However, that would be impossible for this book, or any book. Despite this, we have tried to provide readers with a significant number of consistent and exhaustive case studies which will accompany students and scholars through their journey into toponymy and which will enhance their understanding of the related theoretical notions and issues.

Toponymy is studied in this book according to a very comprehensive approach, both at the historical and historical-linguistic level and at the cultural and sociological level. Place names, therefore, are on the one hand reconstructed etymologically, with plenty of case studies and examples to help readers to follow etymological processes and theories, and on the other hand they are examined according to their relations with cultures, societies, and civilisations, in order to understand not only their historical and linguistic origins, but also the role they play in people's everyday life.

The book consists of ten chapters, generally associating a theoretical component with consistent examples or case studies. This provides readers not only with the necessary set of technical notions inherent in toponymy and toponomastics and the specific subtopics of each chapter, but also with detailed case studies that corroborate the theoretical concepts. The aim is to accompany readers through the study of the methodologies and the analyses of relevant examples. Methods applied are not only from linguistics (e.g., the comparative method and the use and/or reconstruction of sound laws in the historical interpretation of place names), but are derived from a mutual association of all the above-mentioned disciplines which are involved in the study of toponymy. The methodologies discussed in this book are, therefore, multidisciplinary in their nature and, sometimes, experimental.

Each chapter of the volume is focussed on a specific topic or conceptual macro-area. However, we have tried to make sure that each section is not

a ‘watertight compartment’. Each chapter, therefore, despite being aimed at introducing readers to specific notions and examples, makes reference and links to the relevant parts in other chapters and other significant sources, all according to an expressly designed progressive learning path. This is an integral component of the epistemological discourse of the book that takes readers by the hand in a journey into toponymy and toponomastics.

In particular, Chapter 1 is a general but comprehensive introduction to the basic concepts and terminology of toponymy and toponomastics and to the study of place names as a whole; Chapter 2 is a discussion of the study of toponymy under the lens of language change and introduces the notions of ‘historical toponomastics’, ‘diachronic toponymy’, and ‘synchronic toponymy’; Chapter 3 explores different aspects and epistemological elements of historical toponomastics; Chapter 4 illustrates how the study of toponymy can help linguists in reconstructing proto-languages and introduces the theoretical dichotomy between the notions of ‘pre-language’ and ‘proto-language’; Chapter 5 deals with topics and issues in diachronic toponymy and with how toponyms can be studied in communities in the absence of any historical document; Chapter 6 is focussed on the links between landscape, landscape sciences, and toponymy, and on how resources from these disciplines can be used to improve the etymological reconstruction of place names; Chapter 7 investigates the interaction between historical toponomastics and historical geography and, in particular, shows how evidence from historical-geographical resources aids the reconstruction of place names; Chapter 8 deals with the notion of ‘synchronic toponymy’, its methods, and its applications, and explores in detail sociopolitical factors in naming practices, presenting new and more current approaches to toponymy, such as critical toponymies and the notion of ‘commodification of place names’; Chapter 9 examines the relation between place names and society and its sociological and sociolinguistic implications, dealing in particular with the power relations within communities and with how, in postcolonial times, Indigenous people have tried to reclaim their traditional place names; Chapter 10 focusses on the strong link between cartography and toponymy and on the relevance of toponymic data in historical cartography.

Throughout this book, scholars and students are therefore accompanied, step by step, through the analysis and reconstruction of the history and intrinsic elements of place names and, by following the unravelling of a linguistic and sometimes philological reasoning, they are able to ideally draw a sort of ‘identikit’ of those toponyms, and to unveil their stories. Place names, indeed, tell us stories which can often date back hundreds of thousands of years, and they do that just by carrying within themselves ‘simple’ phonemes or morphemes which are, on closer inspection, not that ‘simple’, or not ‘simple’ at all, and are in actual fact a whole universe.

All the contents of this volume show how toponymy is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary study in nature, and to what extent a specific expertise in different fields is necessary to the toponymist to conduct and develop a comprehensive and consistent research of place names. The practice of toponymy also requires competence in historical and philological studies, both at the level of archive investigation and at the textual interpretation level, especially so when the toponymist has to deal with written documents and (possibly ancient) manuscripts. Moreover, the capacity of being able to analyse literary works (with the required background of specific knowledge) is essential in interconnecting the study of toponymy with literature and with toponymic contents of texts which are artistically and culturally significant for human communities and human beings. A deep cultural sensitivity and a firm belief in the scientific mission of linguistic and anthropological investigations are indispensable in the practice of preserving undocumented languages, and these are the foundations of the field linguistics approach to toponymy. Indeed, aboriginal and/or Indigenous place names and their study are an essential component of the safeguarding and documentation of endangered cultural contexts.

The toponymists of the future should, possibly, become ‘global toponymists’, removing all political implications from the term ‘global’ and interpreting it as ‘all-embracing’, ‘multifaceted’, ‘interdisciplinary’, ‘multidisciplinary’, and ‘polymathic’. This, of course, without losing their focus on the place names themselves, on the disciplinary goals, and on the scientific mission of toponymy.

This volume, therefore, aims at providing the toponymists and the toponymists of the future with what we feel is a useful tool to accompany them in a journey through the fields of toponymy and toponomastics and to guide them across the analytical study of place names. An academic book cannot ever replace the everyday practice of research and the experience gained through individual learning and progression in knowledge, but can provide readers with hermeneutic and epistemological instruments which can lay an indispensable foundation for their path. We hope that, along the way, they will encounter many discoveries and the unsuspected but pleasant surprises that toponymy can provide. All the parts of this work could surely be expanded, and they could definitely generate specific books in themselves. Nonetheless, we feel that a volume like this should be a solid and robust synthesis aimed at being a guide to students and scholars as a starting point and encouragement in research, and that it has to be necessarily ‘self-contained’ not in its purpose, but in its contents. It is the task of the toponymists of the future to possibly write the books originating from each chapter of this volume, and we wish them all the best in their endeavours, which will surely deeply enrich our knowledge of this wonderful field of study. Therefore, *sapere aude!*

xxii Preface

As a parting note, we would like to remind our readers that toponyms are not ‘just names’. As we have explained and will expand on in the book, these simple names are often anything but simple, and are able to survive for thousands of years, to overcome dramatic events, and to tell us unexpected tales and unveil unsuspected truths. It is enough to ‘listen to’ these names and, when ‘listening’ is not enough, to study and to investigate them, in a silent and uninterrupted dialogue with them. They will then reveal to us their unwritten stories and, in a way, allow us to give a voice back to our ancestors who crafted them.

Like the pilgrims on the route to Santiago de Compostela (the Camino de Santiago), we would like to close this book with the encouragement, for our readers: *ultreia et suseia!*

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank those that contributed to making this book a reality: the anonymous reviewers, whose insightful and valuable comments helped to make this volume so much better; our research assistants, Ng You Ni Eunice, Phang Sean Jia Jun, Tan Zhi Xuan, Yom Samantha Jing Yi, and, in particular, Lim Shaun Tyan Gin, who helped us with a multitude of tasks and the final editing. Needless to say, any mistake or omission is our responsibility.